

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

20 January 1972

MEMORANDUM

TO : Chief, Office of Training

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FROM : [REDACTED] #129

SUBJECT: Critique of the Basic Operations Course (1/72)

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1. It is a credit to the instructor staff at [REDACTED] that the majority of problems and difficulties which were encountered during the running of the course, both substantive and administrative, were handled on the spot with tact and concern. What follows is a list of comments and recommendations which for one reason or another were not raised at the time at which they developed or are merely afterthoughts.

2. At the beginning of the course it would be useful if a presentation were given on the structure of the DDP. A plumbing chart of the DDP could be presented and included would be the names and a little background information on all personnel from division chief on up. This type of presentation would be of particular value to CT's who have as yet not made up their minds as to what division or staff they would like to apply for as a first assignment. Additionally, a "welcome aboard" speech by a high-level DDP officer would give our subsequent training a greater sense of urgency and importance. I realize that men of great responsibility are pressed for time, but an appearance at the start of the course by one of the "gods" would provide professional inspiration.

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3. [REDACTED] presentation concerning internal Soviet operations gave the class more useful instruction on the mechanics and precautions necessary in employing good tradecraft than was contained in the rest of the course material.

4. The course should contain more coverage and individual exercises on rapid nonscheduled agent communications. I do not mean any of the technical means, but the emergency commo that is laid on with an agent to provide a means of two-way contact

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24-hours a day, seven days a week. I think most students had continual difficulty with commo plans. OO's were very helpful in this area, but often there was too much reliance on OO's to come up with a workable commo plan. I think this subject is very important in good agent operations not only in a functional sense, but a good sound commo plan will impress an agent with his handler's professionalism and competence.

5. The scheduling of hand-gun training and qualifying was miserable. I realize there are administrative considerations here, but there certainly must have been more flexibility in the scheduling of this activity. Late Friday afternoon is the worst possible time, and yet, it was the only time hand-gun training was available.

6. All of the technical training provided in the course was outstanding. I was impressed by the enthusiasm and concern of all the instructors involved. The photography instruction was without equal.

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7. [REDACTED] was a fine start to the course. It set the stage for what was to come. I do think that it would be more effective if students with little operational experience were briefed as to the difference between a staff officer (case officer), a staff agent, and a contract agent (former staff officer or staff agent). The scenerio was a bit confusing because [REDACTED] was not a true NOC staffer, but a retired staffer who is now under contract.

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8. [REDACTED] was very simplistic and often boring, but the lessons it taught were very important. This exercise was the basis of all later casings, but could be jazzed up a little to hold student interest.

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9. [REDACTED] was the heart of the course for me. Most of what I will take away from this course is connected to this exercise. Its position in the schedule (middle of the course) made it pivotal in terms of what was to be gotten out of the course as a whole. I have two main criticisms of this exercise. First, the instructor's cables were way below the minimum standards set by [REDACTED] and his branch. Inadequate, poorly written cables from instructors were less than inspiring to students who were under pressure to get it right the first time.

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I recognize that vagueness was necessary in some cases so that students would have to make their own decisions, but there was no excuse for consistently incorrect format and sloppy grammar. Secondly, rather than continue with the present system, I would recommend that the students copy of the written work in [REDACTED] and all other exercises be a burned copy of the original turned in to the OO with the OO's comments included. In all cases the graded or critiqued paper work was retained by the OO and there was never enough time to cover all the red pencil comments. Further, a copy of corrected work would make an excellent guide for subsequent work. As it was, the same mistakes were often made again and again because a student can not remember all critical comments, nor does he have time to take comprehensive notes.

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10. [REDACTED] was useful and productive in only one respect. The student did not know what was to be expected from him at the conclusion of the exercise so he took it somewhat seriously and as a result a frame of mind was developed to consider every new person met, wherever and when ever, [REDACTED]. This approach to meeting new people made the somewhat meaningless [REDACTED] exercise meaningful and productive. It made, "Hi there, glad to meet you," synonymous with [REDACTED]

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11. [REDACTED] was a good follow-on exercise to [REDACTED] and has many training possibilities. This exercise was the most realistic of all the exercises and in conjunction with the political sensitization problem and [REDACTED] made the waning weeks of the course stimulating.

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12. I suppose [REDACTED] is necessary, but it is so unrealistic that I doubt that it accomplishes very much. A one hour lecture in arena B would probably be as useful. A definite improvement in the exercise would be to give the students a guest list prior to the party so that they would have some idea of who is attending and would be able to find other identities to talk to besides their targets.

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13. After two days of critiques and a week of actual involvement, I am emotionally unable to go into a long discussion of the exercise called [REDACTED]. I was very disappointed with this exercise for many personal, administrative and substantive reasons.

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25X1A2g No matter how structured or how led, the team effort will always be less than that of any of the individuals, if operating alone. The team concept breeds inefficiency, disorganization and ultimately frustration with the exercise and the course. This should not be the effect of a final problem. Students are just not going to sacrifice valuable friendships with fellow students in order to whip a team in shape for the sake of one problem in one course. For sound administrative reasons there are so many unrealistic aspects to this problem that students are unwilling to take the scenerio seriously and forget that when you criticize a teammate you are criticizing a fellow CT or other student. The problem is just not worth going all out. There are good, instructive aspects to [REDACTED] But if the structure and administration of the problem creates an atmosphere of frustration and apathy what good are the benficial aspects? Some students do not believe in "telling it like it is" to the "administration" and I think this is very unfortunate. I think the instructor staff would be quite surprised if they knew that a majority of the students were very disappointed with [REDACTED] and unavoidably lost enthusiasm for this problem in a very short time. I question whether the team concept is that important or whether the administrative necessities of a field exercise require that students be lumped together a little groups because there are not enough role-playing instructors to go around. If the team concept is not critical I reccommend that serious consideration be given to some administratively feasible scenerio which provides for independent and individual operational resonspibility. The team concept as it works out at present means that one or two members do all the important work and feel like martyrs, while the rest of the members do very little and feel quilty.

25X1A2g 14. I reccommend that the special, exclusive dining room be abolished and that when guest speakers take meals at [REDACTED] they sit right down with the students. If no students come to the special dining room a guest feels hurt, if he automatically eats with the students, those interested will seek him out. If none are interested he will never know that he would have had to eat with the course coordinator alone.

25X1A9a 15. I enjoyed the BOC very much. It was a great improvement over the OFC and my overall feelings are those of appreciation and respect for the instructors and support staff who worked very hard to teach me what I must know to begin my career.

[REDACTED]